



PCAG

Perchlorate Community Advisory Group



P.O. Box 886
San Martin, CA 95046
408-683-2667

www.smneighbor.org sylviaLRS@hotmail.com

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, October 6, 2006
2:00 – 4:00 PM

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Administrative Items

- A. Introductions
- B. Attendee Sign-In Sheet - Chairperson Sylvia Hamilton encouraged people to write their name and contact information on the sign-in sheet if they have changes and/or would like to receive information from and about PCAG.
- C. Open Forum – None
- D. August 31, 2006 Meeting Minutes – The minutes were approved with one correction. The date of the DHS hearing is 10/30/06.
- E. Additional Agenda Items – Item II.G, Peekema Letter
- F. Draft 2007 Meeting Dates – The proposed meetings dates were accepted, with the December meeting being scheduled for November 30th, 2007 at 2:00 pm. PCAG agreed to invite Olin to present their Feasibility Study report at the December 8, 2006 meeting.
- G. Peekema Letter – PCAG agreed to invite Mr. Peekema to present his papers on perchlorate at an upcoming meeting. The issues are perchlorate health effects, water analyses for perchlorate, and perchlorate cleanup to background.

III. Presentations/Discussions

- A. **Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner Update (Greg Van Wassenhove):** Greg provided an update on the e.coli/spinach issue, relating it to perchlorate with the common issue of water quality protection. Greg reiterated the County's interest in a risk assessment to better understand the issue of perchlorate in food.
 - Q. What is the County's position on using ion exchange on agricultural wells for long-term cleanup?

A. Olin's Feasibility Study report failed to acknowledge the impact on agriculture from degraded groundwater. The agricultural industry would appreciate some measure of protection from the risks of perchlorate in the water the growers use. Ion exchange is a really good way to filter out perchlorate, but haven't seen a lot of movement toward that.

Q. Can ion exchange be used for treating e. coli?

A. No.

Q. Could surface water be used for agricultural crops instead of treated groundwater?

A. Yes, but surface water deliveries are limited by hydrology/the amount of water in the systems. And, adding new turnouts creates impacts on other users.

Q. Has there been an economic impact on agriculture from perchlorate?

A. Initially, yes. But, now, most crops are not particularly affected by perchlorate.

Q. Which crops are susceptible to perchlorate?

A. Leafy greens.

B. **Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Update (Eric Gobler and Hector Hernandez)**

1. **Feasibility Study Report:** Today, the Regional Water Board issued a letter to Olin regarding the Llagas Subbasin Cleanup Feasibility Study Report. The report was not fully responsive to the Cleanup and Abatement Order requirements. Eric summarized a few key points from the Regional Water Board's letter to Olin:

- a) The report did not support Olin's determination of 4 ppb background perchlorate level. Unless and until Olin proves something else, the Regional Water Board considers zero the background perchlorate level.
- b) The report proposed a cleanup level of 6 ppb for most areas and 24.5ppb for Area 1. The Regional Water Board says cleanup to background is required until Olin has proven that background is greater than zero and /or cleanup to background is determined to be economically infeasible.
- c) There are a number of other issues, including agriculture that need to be addressed in a revised Feasibility Study report that is due 12/6/06.
- d) The Regional Water Board accepted Olin's recommendations for cleanup in Area I and initiated the process for getting active cleanup started.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: it is

Q. Can Olin technically prove background?

A. Yes, there is a methodology. Whether achieving zero is technically and economically feasible is another issue that we'll be dealing with for a long time. Olin needs to start active cleanup.

PCAG Committee Comment: The Regional Water Board did a very professional job. It should not have had to go through all this work because of Olin and Mactec's poor performance on this piece of work.

Q. What can Olin realistically get done in the next 2 months?

A. Olin has sufficient data to do the tasks required in the letter.

Q. When do you hope to have the cleanup plan implemented?

- A. As soon as possible. Olin needs to begin cleanup now, by submitting a work plan for cleanup in Area 1 in December.
- Q. If some wells are nondetect, why isn't background nondetect?
- A. Background is nondetect until otherwise proven. Olin can't say background is 4 ppb based on detections northeast of the site.
- Q. Am I correct in reading into the Regional Water Board's letter that the Regional Water Board is leaning toward naming Olin a discharge for northeast?
- A. Right now, Cleanup and Abatement Order specifically applies to Tennant south. The Regional Water Board is currently looking at options on how to clarify basinwide cleanup versus just south of Tennant Avenue. Regional Water Board staff will be going to the Board in early 2007 to clarify the cleanup level.

PCAG Committee Comment: Nondetect does not equal zero. Olin should test wells on the west side of the subbasin using detection limits below 1.4 ppb.

- Q. Why is there perchlorate in Morgan Hill's Nordstrom Park well if the well is recharged with imported water?
- A. Instead of having Olin start investigating at the Nordstrom well and moving toward the Olin site, the Regional Water Board has directed Olin to start at the site and step out the investigation toward the northeast.

Community Comment: There isn't enough imported water recharge to cleanup the basin.

Response: The Regional Water Board does not promote the "dilution is the solution" approach.

- 2. **Ion Exchange:** There are currently 49 wells above 6 ppb. Olin has installed or is in the process of installing ion exchange on 16 wells and is continuing to evaluate 29 wells.
- 3. **Bottled Water:** Olin terminated bottled water for 498 wells. Regional Water Board staff reviewed all the terminations and found 6 wells were above the PHG of 6 ppb. Those wells were retested. Four of the wells require at least one additional quarter of monitoring. Today, the Regional Water Board sent a letter to Olin clarifying monitoring requirements associated with terminations.
 - Q. How do the residents using the 498 wells know about the monitoring requirements?
 - A. Requirements have been explained in past letters. Also, people can check the database on the Regional Water Board website for testing results. This issue of disseminating information to the community is something the Regional Water Board would like to discuss with Sylvia and PCAG.

Comment: Olin should report on the number of wells and residences for which they are providing bottled water in their monthly reports. The Regional Water Board should also clarify monitoring requirements for private wells that are not subject to bottled water termination.

- C. **DHS Hearing on Proposed Perchlorate MCL:** PCAG agreed that Sylvia should send a letter to DHS that commends them for setting the MCL at the lowest possible number. PCAG agrees with adopting the MCL now, but believes DHS should quickly revisit the MCL if the PHG gets lowered. PCAG does not want DHS to set a higher MCL.
- IV. **Additional Topics, Ion Exchange Certification Update (Tracy Hemmeter):** Tracy explained that there been exchanges between DHS and USFilter/Siemens). DHS has not yet responded to Seimen's 9/21/06 submittal.
- V. **Next Meeting – Friday, November 3rd, 2pm-4pm**
- VI. **Adjournment**